The.iiii. leues of the trueloue

IN a mornyng of may whā medowes cā sprȳge.
Braunches and blossomes of bryght colours
As I wente by a well on my playenge
Thorowe a mery orcharde sayenge my n oures
Where byrdes full bysely began for to synge
The bowes to borge on borde to the browes
I was ware of a may that made mornynge
She sate and syghed amōge the fayre floures so swete
¶ She made mournynge ynoughe
Her wepynge dyd my herte woo
To a derne I me droughe
Her wyll for to knowe
¶ Stylly I stalked and stode in that stede
To wytte of her wyll and of her wylde thought
Then cast she her kercheffes the calle of hede
Wrouge she her handes and wrothly she wrought
¶ She sayd mylde mary ryght thou my rede
Of all the welthe of the worlde wolde I nought
But sende me some solase or sone I shall be dede
A syghte of that selcath I haue it longe sought
¶ Then spake the turtyll on a tree with care
With fayre wordes and free
Bryght byrde of bewte
Why syghest thou so sore
¶ O fayre foule spare not thy speche nor thy spell
They kerpynge doth me comforte to herken and bere
All my wyll and my thought wolde I the tell
My wo and my wandrynge and thou wolde come nere
¶ Then he lyghted louely with her for to dwell
To comforte the comly and euer her chere
She blyssyd his body with boke and with bell
And loued our lady that sente her that fere
¶ Whan I was sory

Besought I our lady so fre
And she sente me company Blessyd maye she be
¶ O fayre foule full of loue so mylde and swete
To medle on a mater nowe we maye begynne
Trueloue I haue sought fer by waye and bystrete
In many fayre orchardes where floures be in,
¶ So ferre as I haue soughte sawe I none yet
Full fewe I haue founde of more or ot myn
Bryght byrde of ble my sorowe myght thou bete
Wolde thou me wysshe wysely a trueloue to wynne
¶ For when I wene sonest
To fynde loue best with ryght
Then so feble is it fest. And fareth all on flyght
¶ The wytte of wymen is wonder to here
Is all thy sory syghynge to seke a loue true
All thy lyfe dayes may thou seke & neuer none be nere
But yf thou had counsayle of one that I knewe
¶ Yf thou beset to seke trueloue I shall the lere
Where it is spryngynge euermore newe
Without ony fautynge full fayre and full clere
Or castynge of coloures or chaungynge of hewe
¶ I dare boldly faye full yare
Thre is no loue that lasteth aye
Without treason or traye. But yf it begyn there
¶ Loke where thou fyndest growyng a truloue gresse
That with .iiij. leues fully is set aboute
The fyrst lefe we maye lyken to the kynge of blysse
He that wrought all the worlde with in and without
¶ He made heuen with his hande and all paradyse
And this mery mydell erthe without ony doubte
All the welthe of the worlde holly is his
In whome we ought to lyue & lowe for to loute
¶ Holde we this in mynde full wele

Tyll we may these felawes fynde
The true loue and kynde. That neuermore shall fele
¶ The seconde lefe of ꝑ trueloue I lyken to goddes sone
That to the fyrst lefe is felawe and fere
The thyrde to the holy goost togyder they wone
All hole in a godhede and persones thre
¶ They be rulers of water sonne and of mone
The fourth lefe of pryce without ony pere
Whan the comly kynge is set in his trone
Comly of colours and curteyse of chere
¶ All this worlde he began with grace
And of wyndes and waters wan
Then he marked man
After his owne face
¶ Fyrst he made Adam and than he made Eue
He put them in to paradyse in grete degre
Forbyddynge nothynge to hym and his wyfe
But a grene apple that dyde growe on a tre
¶ Than sory sathanas sought them belyfe
To awake our wo cursed myght he be
Then toke they the apple that styred moche stryfe
The foule fende was glad that syght for to se
¶ The fyrst leue was wo for tene
Whan floures fell hym fro
That his frendes sholde to hell go
For an apple grene
¶ Then began the fyrst lefe to mourne for vs all
For his holy handy werke that was forlorne
Gabryell to hym he dyde call
Forth came he comly and kneled hym before
¶ He sayd to mylde mary on message thou shall
To bere her gladde tydynges of her I wyll be borne
Thus he sent his sone out of his hye halle

To the mylde mayde on amery morne
¶ Gabryell with the fayre face
Sayd mary full of grace and her gret
Pyerles in euery place
With myght thou arte met
¶ Thou salte conceyue a chylde comly and clere
All the bale of the worlde in the it shall be let
She sayd ꝑ were a meruayle & I a chylde sholde bere
For I was neuer maryed with no man yet
¶ The sayd beholde to thy cosyn ꝑ hath cõceyued to yere
Elyzabeth in her age that longe hath ben lad
O lorde I am thy mayde sayd mary so dere
And holy in thy seruyce is my herte set
¶ Blyssed be the swete wyght
That goddes sone in lyght full styll
Become man full of myght
With the faders wyll
¶ Now is the seconde lefe for our loue moost
Lyght in the lady that gabryell grete
Without ony treason true for to tryst
With myzthe in a mayde is god and man met
¶ This is the fader and the sonne and the holy goste
Thre lefes of loue without ony lette
The fourth is a mayde chosen for chaste
Suche another truloue was neuer in londe sette
¶ The fourth lefe maye neuer fall for bote
But euer they sprynge shall
So gentely they Joyne all
On a ryche roote
¶ Now hathe the thyrde lefe a swete felowe taken
For loue in lady is our lady lyght
Joseph her wedded and with her dyd gone
In the cyte of bethelem there buylded the bryght

¶ Bytwene an oxe and an asse pryde was there none
A blessyd chylde there was borne on crystmas nyght
There rose a sterre stabely shewed and shone
The kynge of colayne theron hadde a syght
¶ They offered to hym as they wolde and sought
Wyte Rykyls and golde
He thanked them many folde
And to blysse he them brought
¶ Unhappy Herode the tydynges herde tell
That a chylde was borne that kynge sholde be
He dyde make messagers and sende them full snell
To slee all male chyldren in that countre
¶ They lefte none alyue but all dyd they kyll
They spytted thē on spere poyntes grete pyte was to se
Joseph with his wedded wyfe wolde no longer dwell
But ledde her in to Egypte with her leues thre
¶ The chyldren coude theyr dethe take
For the trueloue sake for to saue
More myrthe they dyde make
For hym selfe wolde they haue
¶ Yet wolde our lorde do more for his frendes dere
For his holy handy werkes to helle wolde he gone
To gyue ensample his lawe for to lere
Saynt Johan crystened hym in flome iordane
¶ For .xxx. pens was he solde thorowe a false fere
Unto the Jewes that wolde hym haue slayne
All he suffred for our sake and hymselfe was clere
By a kysse was he knowen and sone was he taken
¶ It was grete pyte for to se also
When he sholde blenke of his ble
The seconde lefe of the thre
The fourth was full woo
¶ Pylate was Justyce and spake vp on hye

For to deme Jhesu that Judas hathe solde
He sayd loke lordes trouthe for to trye
The semly is fautles saye what they wolde
¶ The Jues on pylate began for to crye
He calleth hymselfe a kyng suche bourdes be to bolde
Yf thou wylte not deme hym to daye for to dye
Loude before the emperoure the tale shall be tolde
¶ A fury dome he gaue hym there
And sayd that he coude saye no more for drede
Jrede ye take hym there
And forthe ye hym lede
¶ Alas for the fourthe lefe was lefte alone
When her fayre felowshyp was taken and torne
Beten with sharpe scourges body and bone
Syth spred on a crosse and crowned with thorne
¶ Thorowe his handes & fete herte nayles dyd gone
A bryght spere to his herte sharpely was borne
He shed his blode for our loue and lyfe leued hym none
After and ayzell they gaue hym for scorne
¶ It was grete pyte for to se with gyle
Whan he was nayled on a tre
The seconde lefe sycurly
Dyed for vs all
¶ The fourthe lefe of the loke alone she stode
Wryngynge her handes and wepynge for woo
With a mournynge chere and mylde mode
Her sonnes coloure faded and wered wonder blo
¶ Downe by his whyte sydes ran the redde blode
Harde roches dyd ryue and temples in two
Then swowned the fourth lefe and to the ground yode
Alas for the trueloue that it sholde owyne so
¶ She sawe her dere sonne dye
Saynt Johan stode her by full yare

Comforte the lady
That was cast in care
¶ Yet spake ỳ noble kynge that was nayled on the tre
To his moder so mylde that was mournyng that tyde
And sayd leue thy wepyng woman mourne not for me
Take Johan too thy sone that wonneth the besyde
¶ Johan take mary to thy moder for to myrthe the
To kepe and to comforte your blysse for to byde
The hote blode of his sydes caused longes to se
That sought by a spere shafte fro his woũdes wyde
¶ It was gretepyte for to se that daye
Whan he was take of the tree
The seconde leke of the thre
Was closed in clay
¶ Whan he was take of the rode and delued ful yare
All the welthe of ỳ worlde with the iij. leues laye
The fourth for woo fell and syghed full sare
With truth of the worlde was with the true maye
¶ Thoughe his mãhede was dede his myght was the
On his holy handy werkes his herte was aye (more
The soule with the godhede to hell dyde fare
The body and the manhede dyd byde the iij. daye
¶ All that he with his handes had wrought
And sayth with his blode bought full yare
Tyll they were out of bale brought
Hym longed full sare
¶ Than sayd sory sathanas his solowe was sadde
For ỳ syght of the selcuth he was nothynge fayne
He sayd to vs cometh soinbodworde I trowe it be bad
What art thou with thy fayre face thy dyd hym frayne
¶ Kynge of Joye is my name thy gestes to gladde
Let me in for theyr loue thou sholde not layne
He sayd wende awaye with thy myght thou makest vs

all made
what sholde thou do in this pyt here is nothyng but (payne
¶ whan they herde the kynge spake
All theyr gates they dyd shyt fast
Sone the barres dyd brcke
And all the bandes brast
¶ For his holy handy werkes there harowed he hell
All thē brought out of bale that euer had ben his
Dauyd his derlyage made myrthe them amonge
With an herpe in his hande he harped I wysse
¶ All his retenue out coude he tell
And of his grete mercy forgaue them theyr mysse
He sayd I was solde for your sake and suffred woūdes
And all my good chyldrē be brought vnto blysse (wyde
¶ The sothe is not to layne on the roode
whan they were brought out of payne
To the blysfed body agayne
The holy goost yode
¶ The fourth lefe of the trucloue was folden for wo
She was lefte mayde moder and wyfe
The fyrste lefe full of myght his wyll was so
By the assente of the thyrde lefe was there no stryke
¶ They reysed vp the seconde bytwene them two
Thorowe myght of the godhede from derthe vnto lyfe
He toke a crosse in his hande and forthe he dyd go
With his flesshe and his woundes fyfe
¶ whan he was rysen agayne he yode
He mette mary magdalayne
It was no meruayle yf she was fayne
¶ He was her leche good (mode
¶ Forth wente mari magdalayne with myrth and with
She tolde the tydynges to Tomas of ynde
How cryst was rysen agayne that shed his hert blode

Leue this Thomas thou shalte it true fynde
¶ Then spake Thomas in stede there he stode
Women be talkynge it cometh to them by kynde
He wolde neuer byleue it tyll cryste to hym yode
And apered to the apostles so clerkes hath in myude
¶ He put his hande to his syde
He blessed all that tyme
That byleued on his woundes wyde
And sawe they neuer with eye
¶ Forthe wente the semly the soth for to saye
To seke his dyssyples that euer were true
Sayth to our lady that he had loued ay
All hole in his hurtes of hyde and of hewe
¶ She was euer stable and styll and fayled neuer faye
The iiij. leues of troueloue they sprynge euer newe
Our lorde assended in to heuen on holy thursdaye
Then folowed his moder with myrthes ynowe
¶ Before her sone she kneled downe full euen
With a good deuocyon
On her hede he set a crowne
And made her quene of heuen
¶ The iiij. lefe of the trueloue blessed must she be
She may haue Joye in her herte of her gentyll chylde
On his faders ryght hande her sone maye she se
And the holy ghost that to them can bylde
¶ Now be they hole in one godhede & persones thre
And she is mayde of myght and moder full mylde
Suche a nother trueloue growed neuer on tre
Who so trysteth on that trueloue shall not be gyled
¶ Wellis that wyght so hende
That maye besure of the syght
Where euer is daye and euer lyght
And Joye without ende

¶Thus hathe the fayre trueloue made vs all fre
Our soules out of bondage & bought vs on the rode
He commaunded vs to kepe and gaue pauste
Our soules out of synne for ony worldes good
¶Woche sorow wolde we haue & we our soules myght se
When they be sonken in synne as ryssche in a flode
Then abyde we in bondage in bale for to be
He that vs boughte with his holy herte blode
¶He bad axe mercy whan we maye
And byd our lady for vs pray to haue blysse
Or we be closed in claye
Or elles of our myrthe shall we mysse
¶Blessyd be the trueloue so meke and so mylde
Sure and stedfast and stable in faye
Whan we haue wrathed iij. with our werkes wylde
The fourth leke is gracyous and good vs to helpe aye
¶Then kneleth she downe before her dere chylde
Sore weppynge for our sake with her eyes graye
She is euer full of grace alas we were begyled
She wynneth with her weppynge many fayre praye
¶Syth she is welthe of our wele for to kepe
And all our care wolde kele
Alas why make ye her to knele
And for our werkes wepe
¶There is none in this worlde so doughty nor so dere
Kynge nor quene thoughe he were a crowne
Nor no fayre ladyes of colours so clere
Whan dredfull dethe cometh it drayweth all downe
¶Yet lyst vs neuer leue it for preste nor for fryer
Tyll we fele we fall with swelte and with swowne
Whan the bare body is broughte on bere
Than fayleth all felawshyp in felde and in towne
¶In a clothe be we knyt

Syth put in a pyt and erth vpon vs done
Of all the worlde be we quyt
Forgoten be we soone
¶ For the caytyf corse there is but lytell care
& we were sure of our soules where they sholde dwell
But nowe is nowe in this worlde so wyse his of late
Nor no clerke in compynge that therof can tell
¶ How ferre and how fele our soules must fare
Hardwayes is to heuen and hasty to hell
In purgatory is grete payne who so cometh there
Of moche wo shall they wyt that therin shall dwell
¶ What so euer we do here we fare so longe
Before vs shall we fynde there
We maye be sure of no more
When paynes be full stronge
¶ When grete fyers grym be made in our gate
Then is there no glosynge but it must we glyde
When we be put in the payne so harde and so hote
We seke after socoure on euery syde
¶ We crye after kynne folke they come to vs to late
Then he haue felte the fyer fayled is our pryde
Then of all our sorowe no certayne we wate
But truste on the trueloue his mercy to abyde
¶ Now is tyme to begynne with drede
The trueloue to wynne
That all our bales he maye blyn
Whan he haue mooste nede
¶ Of all ŷ dayes ŷ we haue lyued ones shall we knowe
Whan we remẽbre our foule synnes sore may we mone
Whan the grete lorde aboue his bemes shall blowe
And hye Justyse shall syt in his trone
¶ And all the folke in the worlde shall ryse on a rowe
The quycke maye quake whan the dede shall vp ryse

We may lette for no shame our synnes to showe
There is no golde nor fee ẏ may make our maynpryse
¶ For then is all our pryde gone and kynne
Our robes and our ryche pane
Saue a crysome alone
That we were crystened in
¶ When we be called to ẏ courte vs be houeth to here
All shall be there sene bonde men and free
The soule and the body that longe hath sen sere
Be houeth to be present at the semble
¶ Euery soule shall be sende to seke after his fere
Whan cryste well vs gather a grete lorde is he
With our flesshe and our fell as we in worlde were
Neuer more to sonder after that daye be
¶ Our werkes be wryten and scorde
In a rolle of recorde for to knowe
Before the grete lorde
Full sharply to showe
¶ We must seke thyder in a symple tyer
Tremblynge and quakynge as lefe on a tree
Whan all the worlde is set with water and fyer
There is no wrēche nor no wyll wyll wysshe vs to fle
¶ When cryste is greued he is a grymsyer
So many synfull wretches as he there shall see
Then dare not his moder yf she wolde desyre
Not speke to her son so dredfull is he
¶ All to sayntes in heuen that daye
They shall be styll of theyr steuen
They dare not a worde meuen
For no man to praye
¶ The werckes of mercy he wyll reken them seuen
When I was thrusty how hardly haue ye me fedde
When I was thrusty how hardly haue ye me gyuen

¶ When I was naked how haue ye me cledde
¶ When I was houſles harbowred ye me ſuen
Or bylyte me in ſyknes or ſought to my bedde
Or comforted me in pryſon that worde I here meuen
Or brought me to buryeng when deth hath me ſted
¶ Or lorde when ſawe we the they ſaye
Euer in ony ſuche degree
He ſayd the leeſt in the name of me
That thou myght praye
¶ He wyll ſhewe vs his woundes blody and bare
All he ſuffred for our ſake bytter and wyde
Kynges and quenes before hym muſt fare
Byſſhoppes and barons all muſt abyde
¶ Erles and Emperours none wyll he ſpare
Preſtes nor prelates or perſones of pryde
Juſtyſe and Juges of lawe and of lere
That now be full ryall to rynne and to ryde
¶ Theyr dome ſhall they take there
Ryght as they haue demed here in londe
When they were of myght more
And domes had in hande
¶ Ryche ladyes that hathe robes full yare
Ryches and rubyes with gownes full wyde
Bendes and myrroures and fyllettes full fayre
Golde on theyr garlondes with perre and pryde
¶ Kalle and kercheffes that coucheth on theyr heyre
So ſharply and ſhynynge to ſhewe by theyr ſyde
All that welthe is away and myrth moche more
But yf we wyn the trulone vnglad maye we glyde
¶ Betyme is beſt to begyn for ſorowe
Or we be ſonken in ſynne
For then is nother kyth nor kynne
Fro bale may vs borowe

¶By lordes and ladyes all I wyll not saye
But some thynge by other folkes ꝑ I fynde full wele
The galande gedlynge that kythis gentry
With daynty damoyselles no man may dele
¶They haue purfels and perles and heddes full hye
Thoughe her corse be the myddle of her kattell
Yt men talke of her kynne awaye wyll she wrye
Her fader and moder fayre wolde she hyll
¶When that daye shall begyn and tyde
No man shall shame with theyr kynne
All shall shame with theyr synne
And with theyr foule pryde
¶The dome of the trueloue full sore maye we drede
For then is all the tyme past of mercy to craue
When euery man is demed after his owne dede
Thé may not our selfe sterte & sende forthe our knaue
¶For he rekeneth by reason so clerkes can rede
He setteth on his ryght hãde ꝑ soules that he wyll saue
The synfull wretches that maye not spede
Shall staude on his lefte hande awaye for to haue
¶Then wyll our lady wepe sore
For sorowe that she shall se there for aye
Whan she maye helpe no more
Grete mournynge shall be that daye
¶Now is tyme for to speke for them that wyll spede
And seke after socoure and foly to flee
And not on domes daye whan we haue moost nede
Now is moche mercy and then wyll none be
¶When our dere lady dare not for drede
Speke to her dere sone so dredfull is he
How maye we axe mercy for our mysdede
That wyll not folowe to it whan it is fre
There is no waye but ij. thore

7°

wheder that we shall go To wele and to woo
To dwell for euermore
¶ Thus the bryght byrde taught the true maye
And she blessyd his body his bone and his blode
To the fourthe lefe I rede that we praye
That she wolde our message do with a mylde mode
¶ And speke for the loue before the last daye
To the thyrde lefe gracyous and good
The loue of the iiij. leues that we wynne maye
That grace graunt grete god that dyed on the rode
¶ This I herde in a valaye walkynge
As I wente on my waye In a mournynge of maye
whan medowes can sprynge

¶ Enprented at London in Flete strete at the sygne at the lonne/ by wynkyn de worde.

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